

Tempos de Capanema, by Simon Schwartzman, Helena Maria Bousquet Bomeny, and Vanda Maria Ribeiro Costa. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paz e Terra, 1984. Note. Illustrations. Bibliography. Pp. 388. Paper.

In the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 66 (2), May 1986, 423-424. By Michael L. CONNIF, University of New Mexico.

Simon Schwartzman has emerged as one of the finest writers on twentieth-century Brazilian history. His latest work draws on the Gustavo Capanema papers left to the CPDOC research center in 1978. Correspondence, photos, clippings, and other materials comprise this huge collection.

Capanema, the quintessential Mineiro politician, served as acting governor of his state in 1933 and then as minister of education and culture from 1934 to 1945. An action-oriented intellectual who surrounded himself with like-minded men, Capanema both reflected and helped shape Brazil's intellectual environment of the 1930s and early 1940s. Essentially conservative, traditional, and Catholic, this group kept national educational and cultural policies on the right end of the ideological spectrum. Their style has been termed conservative modernization. Because President Vargas cared little about educational and cultural matters, Capanema and his collaborators enjoyed *carte blanche* powers. They, like their liberal rivals, believed that education would permanently alter the course of Brazilian history by shaping future generations, and they approached their work with a zeal that sometimes bordered on fanaticism. They were right about their impact, though they did not foresee the survival of some and importation of other alternative philosophies in postwar Brazil.

This volume is neither a biography nor a history of Capanema's term as minister; rather, it is a fascinating sampling of his multiple activities as revealed in his correspondence during these years. Schwartzman and his co-authors knit the material together with subtlety, yet allow Capanema and his generation to speak for themselves. Their motives and personal hopes for Brazil take precedence over their actual accomplishments in this treatment. The narrative is followed by about a hundred letters to and from some of the most renowned figures of twentieth-century Brazil. All students of modern Brazil will wish to peruse this book, and intellectual historians will devour it.